

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-03 SCA-01 TRSE-00 VO-03 OC-06 CCO-00

CPR-02 L-03 ST-01 SS-20 SPC-03 NSC-07 DRC-01 (ISO) W

----- 034611

R 201236Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7032

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD BY POUCH

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UR ASEC ATRN CGEN

SUBJ: CUSTOMS INSPECTION OF MARINE UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE

REF: A. MOSCOW 3216

B. STATE 050074

1. EMBASSY, AFTER RECEIPT OF REF (B), CALLED PROTOCOL DIVISION OF MFA (PASHKIN, SECOND SECRETARY) TO REQUEST ITS ASSISTANCE IN PRYING LOOSE TWO TRUNKS BELONGING TO NEWLY ARRIVED MARINES FROM MOSCOW CUSTOMS, WHICH WAS INSISTING ON ITS RIGHT TO OPEN AND INSPECT THE TRUNKS. EMBASSY CONCEDED THAT NO EXISTING AGREEMENT PROVIDES FOR INSPECTION-FREE ENTRY FOR MARINE UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE, BUT ARGUED THAT INSPECTION IN THIS CASE WOULD NEVERTHELESS BE A POOR PRECEDENT, SINCE TREND FOR BOTH SIDES HAS BEEN TOWARD LESS INTERFERENCE WITH FREE ENTRY OF BAGGAGE AND HHE FOR OFFICIAL PERSONNEL, NOT MORE. PASKHIN, AFTER SPEAKING WITH CUSTOMS OFFICIALS, NEVERTHELESS RETURNED EMBASSY'S CALL TO PARROT STANDARD LINE ABOUT "EXISTING AGREEMENTS."

2. EMBOFF THUS PROCEEDED TO CUSTOMS MORNING OF MARCH 19 WITH KEYS IN HAND, READY, IF NECESSARY, TO OPEN TRUNKS TO ASSURE THEIR PASSAGE. EMBOFF WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE DEPUTY CHIEF OF CUSTOMS, HOWEVER, THAT PRECEDENT WOULD INDEED BE A POOR ONE,
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AND DEPUTY CHIEF -- THE SAME OFFICIAL WHO HAD ORIGINALLY

INSISTED THAT TRUNKS BE OPENED -- AGREED TO LET TRUNKS PASS
UNOPENED.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY IS UNCERTAIN WHAT LESSON TO DRAW FROM
THIS LATEST MANEUVER ON THE CUSTOMS FRONT; PERHAPS SUREST ONE
WOULD BE A SIMPLE REAFFIRMATION OF COMMONPLACE THAT ONLY
CONSISTENCY AT LOWER LEVERS OF SOVIET BUREAUCRACY IS ITS
INCONSISTENCY.
STOESSEL

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Disposition Authority: morefirh
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